

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This paper is submitted responsive to the Official Action mailed September 9, 2004. Reconsideration of the application in light of the accompanying remarks and amendments is respectfully requested.

The undersigned would like to thank the Examiner for courtesy extended during a telephone interview conducted to discuss the outstanding official action, application of prior art and pending claims. In that interview, it was discussed and agreed that claim 1, if amended to recite at least two axially spaced circumferential bands, would appear to define over the art of record.

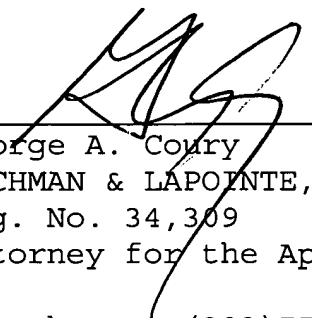
By the present amendment, claim 1 has been amended as discussed, claim 4 cancelled without prejudice, and remaining dependent claims have been amended to be consistent with amended claim 1.

Based upon the foregoing, it is believed that the claims are in condition for allowance, and such early and favorable action is therefore respectfully solicited.

It is believed that no fee is due in connection with this paper. If, however, any fee is due, please charge same to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

Respectfully submitted,

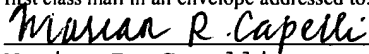
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Date: December 6, 2004

I, Marian R. Capelli, hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313 on December 6, 2004


Marian R. Capelli